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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 6070
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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

The Jerusalem Post quoted sources in Washington as saying that Under

Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns is slated to

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head the American side negotiating Israel's new aid package. The newspaper quoted "individuals close to the issue" as saying that the designation of the number three at the State Department as the team leader indicates the seriousness with which the Bush administration regards the talks. However, The Jerusalem Post reported that the State Department declined to confirm Burns' participation in the talks. The Jerusalem Post quoted former Israeli ambassador to the US Danny Ayalon as saying on Monday that Israel should ask the US for increased military assistance, with the option of one-time special aid, to deal with "real and present" strategic threats, but avoid asking for any outright civilian aid. Ayalon remarks came as a high-level Israeli delegation began talks in Washington on the subject. The Jerusalem Post further quoted Ayalon as saying that it was wise to try and reach multi-year agreement with the US now, under the Bush administration.

Ha'aretz reported that on Monday Hamas political bureau chief Khaled Mashal visited Moscow for a series of meetings with the Russian leadership on the Palestinian unity government. Mashal is scheduled to meet today with Russian FM Sergey Lavrov. During his visit, Mashal called for the lifting of the international embargo on the Palestinian government, and blamed Israel for the diplomatic impasse. Ha'aretz also reported that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Monday to discuss the future of the unity government and the American demands that it abide by the Quartet's demands.

The media (banner in The Jerusalem Post) cited the Shin Bet as saying on Monday that IDF troops have arrested two Palestinian youths for the murder of Erez Levanon, an Israeli whose body was found north of the West Bank city of Hebron late Sunday. Ha'aretz reported that the largest Israeli raid in the West Bank for months continued on Monday, with a full curfew imposed on tens of thousands of Nablus residents as soldiers raided the city's old market in search of militants and arms. The forces uncovered an explosives laboratory, the second in 24 hours. This morning Israel Radio reported that the DF troops have left Nablus.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Turkish diplomatic officials as saying on Monday that Ankara is in the process of putting together its excavations at the Mugrabi Gate in Jerusalem's Old City, with the inspectors expected to arrive some time next week.

The Jerusalem Post reported that FM Tzipi Livni told UN special envoy Michael Williams on Monday that the world must stop the rearming of Hizbullah if it wants to see stability in the region.

Ha'aretz reported that IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi will annul most organizational changes made by his predecessor, Dan Halutz. A report prepared by reserves General and former police superintendent Herzl Shafir found that those changes caused harm during last summer's Lebanon war.

Ha'aretz reported that, during her recent visit, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met with Meretz Knesset Member Zahava Gal-On. The newspaper wrote that Rice did not express much interest about Gal-On's views on the peace process or the Palestinians, but that the talks focused on the fight against trade in women.

Ha'aretz reported that on Sunday the Yemenite government airlifted 45 Jews from Sa'dah, in the north of the country, to Sana'a, the capital, after suffering from threats and harassment by opposition supporters. Ha'aretz said that those Jews emphasized that they do not want to immigrate to Israel currently.

Media reported that new Social Affairs Minister Yitzhak Herzog was also appointed Diaspora Affairs Minister. However, Ha'aretz said that the handling of the return of Holocaust-era assets will remain entrusted to Pensioners Affairs Ministers Rafi Eitan.

Ha'aretz and Maariv reported that US Marines in Iraq will get Israeli-made armored vehicles, following the success of Rafael (Armaments Development Authority) in a Marines' tender for vehicles to be deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Rafael will supply 60 armored personnel carriers, worth USD 37 million, in a first stage

of the deal. Several American and other companies contended for the tender last week, consisting of 4,000 armored vehicles. The contenders had to fulfill strict requirements, including protection from roadside bombs, mines and RPG rockets.

All Hebrew-language media led with domestic issues, principally an expected general strike on Wednesday.

11. Mideast:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Matityahu East is the latest in a series of such affairs in which the separation barrier, supposedly serving Israel's security needs, is used to annex West Bank territory to expand the settlements."

Palestinian contributor Daoud Kuttub wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "US diplomats complain that [the Mecca] Agreement 'complicates things.' This is a shameful position."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Legitimization of Land Theft"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (2/27): "The theft of private land and lawless construction, with the authorities' collaboration, have long been routine in the land of the settlers. The scope of these deeds and their seriousness are described extensively in the report on illegal outposts compiled by Talia Sasson, formerly a senior state prosecution attorney. The report was buried almost two years ago. However, the decision of the Supreme Planning Council (SPC) for Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank], which was revealed in Ha'aretz on Sunday, to legitimize the plan to build the Matityahu East neighborhood in Modi'in Ilit, beyond the Green Line, marks a nadir.... Matityahu East is the latest in a series of such affairs in which the separation barrier, supposedly serving Israel's security needs, is used to annex West Bank territory to expand the settlements. The Defense Minister is dragging his feet on everything concerning the evacuation of illegal outposts..... If the government does not quash the planning council's decision to allow construction to continue, the High Court will have no choice but to respond to the recent petition. It will have to abrogate that decision, to protect both the rule of law and the rights of those victimized by its breach."

II. "Support the Mecca Agreement"

Palestinian contributor Daoud Kuttub wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (2/27): "It gives me pleasure, but at the same time it is kind of sad, to see the Israelis and the Americans squirming.... The Mecca agreement represents a clear shift in Hamas's alignment, from the Iranian-Syrian axis to the Saudi side. In response, however, US diplomats complain that this agreement 'complicates things.' This is a shameful position. It is a shame for a superpower to say that the outcome of a democratic election -- isn't that supposed to be Bush's legacy? -- and a deal for Palestinian unity aimed at ending internal Palestinian bloodletting and saving lives 'complicates things.' It is shameful that the Americans are demanding of Palestinians what they have not demanded of the Lebanese, Saudis or even of the Iraqi regime operating under US occupation. Washington has not demanded that sovereign Arab countries recognize Israel. But it is demanding that a government that is not sovereign recognize the very state that is occupying its land -- a state whose borders have yet to be determined.... The fact that the Islamic leaders have agreed to a long-term 'hudna,' provided that a Palestinian state is created within the 1967 armistice lines, shows that the vast majority of Palestinians, Arab

countries, the US and the international community are all in agreement about the two-state solution. What is missing now is for the Israelis to agree to begin talks on how to accomplish this goal. Bush did declare it to be one that his administration was hoping to accomplish.... The fact that the Islamic leaders have agreed to a long-term hudna, provided that a Palestinian state is created within the 1967 armistice lines, shows that the vast majority of Palestinians, Arab countries, the US and the international community are all in agreement about the two-state solution. What is missing now is for the Israelis to agree to begin talks on how to accomplish this goal. Bush did declare it to be one that his administration was hoping to accomplish."

12. Iran:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Our government should be doing more than reacting to this or that political or diplomatic fire. The times demand comprehensive thinking, a coherent strategy and concerted action."

Block Quotes:

"Strategy and Action"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (2/27): "The picture painted by our intelligence agencies of the year ahead, in a presentation to the cabinet on Sunday, was not a pretty one.... The truth is Israel is not helpless. The problem is that our government leaders seem to be too preoccupied with the stability of their coalition and the next day's headlines to develop and follow a national security strategy. Such a strategy would be beginning with what has become the central lesson taken from the last war: the folly of allowing our enemies to amass huge arsenals on our borders.... [But] confronting Iran's proxies in Lebanon and Gaza does not deal with the main source of these problems, the mullahs in Tehran.... The task of isolating Iran should not be left to the world's leading governments, but should also be pursued from the ground up, like the campaign against other dictatorial regimes. Also, governmental action should not be limited to Iran's nuclear program. The Security Council should also be acting against Iran's international aggression through its support for terrorist proxies. And the signatories of the Genocide Convention (almost all nations) should be seeking an indictment of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for incitement to genocide, which is a punishable crime under Article III of that treaty. There is, in short, much work for Israel to do, both publicly and behind the diplomatic scenes. Our government should be doing more than reacting to this or that political or diplomatic fire. The times demand comprehensive thinking, a coherent strategy and concerted action."

JONES